WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY STUDENT CAN LEARN AND SUCCEED.

Mount Tom Academy is a student centered, individualized pathway to high school graduation and beyond, matched to each student's own learning style, in a small classroom setting.

The Academy was founded in 1999 and is a program of the Collaborative for Educational Services. Through a partnership with Holyoke Community College, Mount Tom Academy is located on the HCC campus.

Students at the Academy have agency in making a plan for themselves, and learning how they learn best.

Their individualized plans include both the academic and emotional support needed. The program identifies the strengths, talents, and unique abilities of its participating students. Student progress is assessed, goals monitored and plans adjusted all the way along the line, so that the program can be responsive.

At Mount Tom Academy, students have an opportunity to develop their voice, learning to articulate what it is that they need.
PART OF THE HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

Students are encouraged to explore and appreciate the personal freedom and responsibility of attending high school on a college campus. All students receive college identification cards and may be assigned parking privileges. Students share in the full college setting that includes the cafeteria, library, and entry to lecture series, theater performances and presentations as they are available. Transportation is provided by the student’s family, the student, or the sending school district.

Qualified high school students may pursue dual enrollment options to earn both high school and college credit. For dual enrollment, students must be in their junior or senior year of high school and be ready for college-level work. Students must also take HCC’s Computerized Placement Test.

OUR APPROACH

The program accommodates a wide variety of learning styles, and students and teachers work together to build individual learning plans and schedules for the completion of schoolwork. Coursework is matched to the sending high school’s curriculum. The Academy encourages independent study using computer-assisted coursework, study and mastery goals that are customized weekly, coaching, and activities in community service, enrichment, art, and music. With a high staff to student ratio, we offer significant one on one support if needed.

Students work both individually and together in groups, depending on the subject matter. Sharing builds community, and it cultivates a group that connects in a new way with each other.

“Mount Tom Academy was a great alternative for several of my students who had challenges in the larger setting of our high school. They provided a safe place where my students’ confidence grew, their obstacles seemed within reach, and they succeeded for the first time in a long time academically. All four of my students may not have made it without the program.”

– Sending School District Counselor

2020 Mount Tom Graduate, Megan
TESSA’S STORY:

After speaking at her graduation in 2020, Tessa Scagiarini was welcomed back to Mount Tom Academy in June of 2021 as alumni speaker for the 2021 graduation. Tessa spoke about her experience at Mount Tom Academy:

“The beauty of this program is not only getting a second chance at a high school diploma. It’s getting a second chance at life. I never thought I would make it this far. I never thought I would make such amazing friends and be a part of a family. Because that is what Mount Tom is, we are a family. We make memories together, we laugh, we cry, but most importantly we love and support each other.

I think one of the greatest things this program did for me is to break me out of my shell and give me a voice of my own. The three years I spent here flew by, and I couldn’t have asked for better people to have been surrounded by. I can honestly say that without the opportunity I had at Mount Tom, I am not sure where I would be, or what I would be doing. I am currently a full time criminal justice major at HCC, and also maintaining a part time job. Without this program I would probably not have a job or be in college. When I first joined this program I was in a dark head space. I never really talked to anyone, I didn’t want to participate in activities and I honestly didn’t want to be there. I was welcomed in the warmest possible way and I was reminded that I could be happy again. It turned out that being at Mount Tom Academy was one of the greatest things I would ever experience in my life.”

IS MOUNT TOM ACADEMY A MATCH FOR MY STUDENT?

Mount Tom Academy is designed to meet the learning needs of students who have had difficulty in the traditional high school setting, whether social, emotional, or academic; and serves students from school districts throughout the Pioneer Valley. Students choose Mount Tom for all kinds of reasons. Many have come to avoid school, or have had health or mental health emergencies, family members that are ill, or other things that interrupted their schooling. Students considering our program should be at grade levels between grades 9 and 12 and demonstrate maturity and the ability to attend classes in a college environment.

Mount Tom does not provide special education services. The program will accept students who have IEPs if those services are provided through the district.

Students will find a caring community that honors that they are each in a different place with their learning.
“My daughter felt comfortable in the classroom and on campus right away. She has a valuable experience each day: being intellectually stimulated with meaningful discourse, provided a platform to help others, and given the opportunity to stand on her own two feet with personalized learning. She’s able to take control of her own education her way.”

– Mount Tom Academy parent

ENROLLMENT AT MOUNT TOM ACADEMY

Admission is on a rolling basis and may occur throughout the school year. Total enrollment in the program is usually between 15 and 20 students. Students remain on the sending high school’s rolls and, upon completion of Mount Tom Academy, receive high school diplomas from the sending school.

FOR PARENTS:

The first step for applying for admission to Mount Tom Academy is to schedule an appointment with the guidance counselor at your student’s high school. Referrals are accepted through the school district. Your student’s ability to participate in Mount Tom will be decided through an intake process which includes an on campus visit and interview, and open communication between the student, family, and school district.

We will need:

• A copy of the high-school transcript and a copy of the most current report card
• A copy of any Chapter 766 Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, if relevant
• Approval of the principal or director of the sending high school (required if currently enrolled)
• A referral from the high school to be in a diploma program, if the student has previously left school

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO EXPLORE ENROLLMENT OPTIONS, CONTACT:

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